

# The Confluence

The Journal of Colorado Plateau River Guides

Number 23



**Black George (expanded!)**

**Interpretive Trip Reports**

**Jim Knipmeyer on James**

**Black**

**Articles from the Board**

**Willie Taylor's demise**

**Pop's Smith**

**Dark Canyon and Lower**

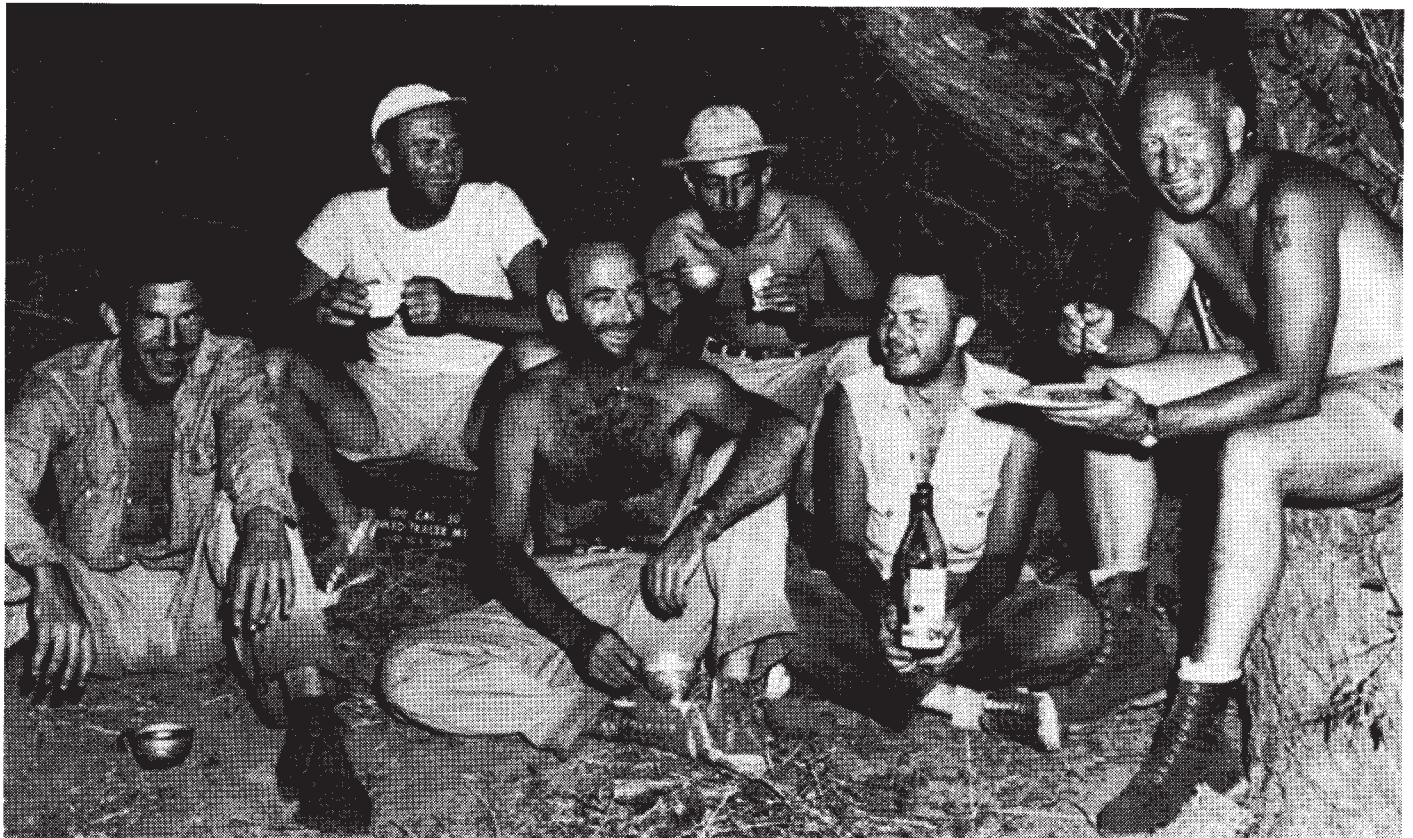
**Cataract Revisited in**

**Photo and Story**

**Early Commercial Brochures**

**Bert Lopers last words**

**David Yeamans**



USGS 1956 Cataract Expedition: L-R: Hank Dyer, Frank Mckeown, George Simmons, Dick Rezak, Russ Campbell, Dick Lewis  
White Canyon, Utah, July 29.

# The Confluence

...wants to be the quarterly journal of Colorado Plateau River Guides, Inc. Colorado Plateau River Guides is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to:

- \* Protecting the rivers of the Colorado Plateau.
- \* Setting the highest standards for the river profession.
- \* Providing the best possible river experience.
- \* Celebrating the unique spirit of the river community.

**Guide Membership** is open to anyone who works or has worked in the river industry of the Colorado Plateau.

**General Membership** is open to those who love the rivers of the Colorado Plateau.

#### Membership dues:

- \$ 20 per year
- \$100 for 6 years
- \$195 for life
- \$295 Benefactor

**General Meetings and Board of Directors**  
Meetings will be announced.

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We need articles, artwork, poetry, photos, stories, and opinions. This journal is composed with Microsoft Word on an IBM PC. If you use a word processor, we can translate most programs. Otherwise, please send your text double-spaced. Please include useful photos, charts, diagrams and artwork. There really is no deadline, but the beginning of each quarter works best.

**Managing editor:** John Weisheit

**Editor this issue:** Dave Focardi

**Printing:** Times-Independent

**ISSN # 1078-425X**

**Date:** June 2001

#### Party!

Boatman Bash

Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

Tex's Riverways

#### DISCLAIMER

The opinions and statements made within the pages of The Confluence are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position of the guide membership, the board of Colorado Plateau River Guides, nor Canyon Country Volunteers. If you have an opposing or supporting viewpoint please send your comments to CPRG.

#### Special Thanks To:

Brad Dimock for a Benefactor membership

Tim Payne for a 6 year membership

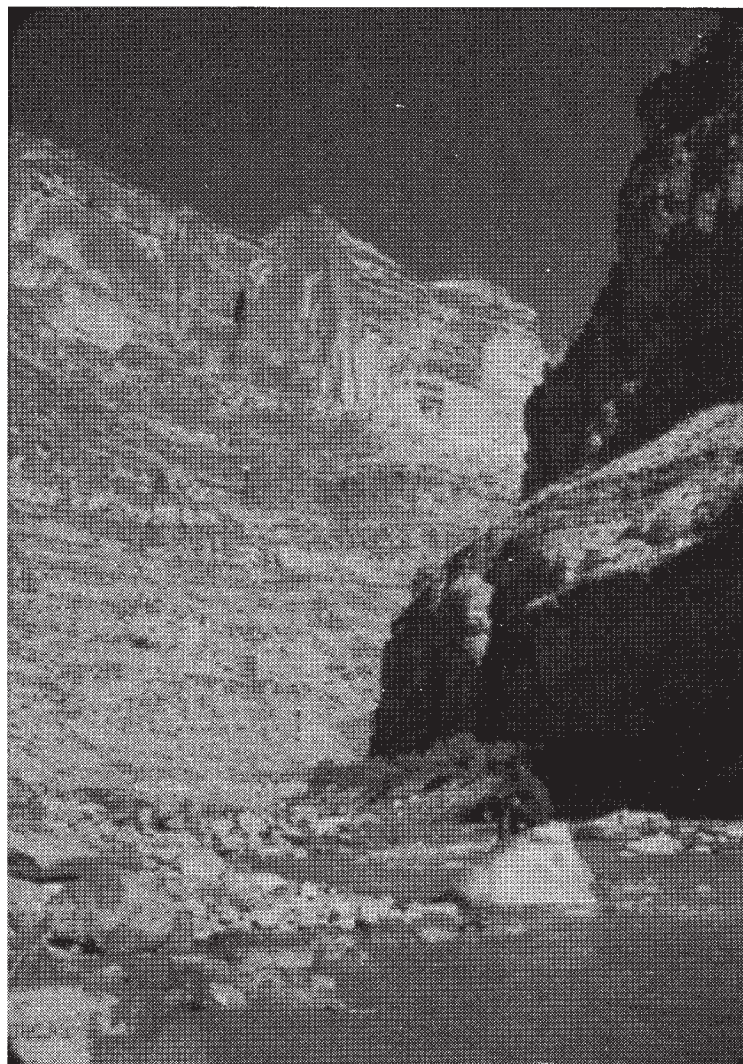
**Issue/Numbering:** In keeping with the new numbering system, this is now issue #23.  
**Thanks for financing this river trip!**

#20—Volume 7, Number 1, Spring 2000, Prop in a rock

#21—Volume 7, Number 3, Fall 2000, CNP vertebrate survey

#22—David Brower on cover

#23— This issue



Black George, mouth of Clearwater Canyon, 1952

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Hello From the President

Anyone else been creamed by the wind yet this spring? My lands if it hasn't been a windy one this year. I have no advice on that, just don't get blown away!

I would just like to recap the CPRG events that have taken place this year. I also want to let you know what is in the works for the fall so you can all have it on your back burners for now. I think that the interpretive trips were a smashing hit. Big thanks to Jake Burnett for coordinating the Desolation Canyon trip, also to Shane Edwards for coordinating the Cataract trip, and Dave Focardi who put together the San Juan trip. Thank you for pulling it all together. Also a big thanks to all those who participated in this year's Guide Education Seminar. I think the event was another CPRG success. I especially would like to thank Eric Trenbeath for putting the T shirt together and generally making things happen!

The big news around town is rapid number 15 in CAT, the artist formally known as Capsize. According to the old timers, Richard Jones, Dee Holiday, Kent Frost, John Weisheit and T Berry (not that John or T Berry are old timers yet) rapid number 15 (top of mile long) is actually called Hell To Pay. We all know the Best inscription there and hike there frequently. The "Capsize" inscription, however, is river left, one rapid down or at what we have always called Marty's Hole. We did not decide the name fate of rapid 16. Call it what you like, Marty's, Bobby's, Capsize, that really fun thing below Hell to Pay, you decide. We decided and voted unanimously to call rapid number 15, Hell to Pay (not Capsize).

So, upcoming events: I am aiming for a CPRG general meeting the last weekend of October or the first weekend of November. Any preferences out there? Let me know. The Utah Guides and outfitters will be meeting in Moab (Moab Valley Inn), October 11 through 13. I will try to make sure that there are good "guide" topics and clinics for all to attend. CPRG members are all cordially invited. I also would like to organize a CPRG fun (no agenda) flat water trip in the fall. What do you guys think? Is there any interest in it? Lastly, Richard Quartaroli from the Grand Canyon River Guides would like to join their guides with us (CPRG) for our annual fall meetings. I don't know what to think about this. I

thought I would throw it out there and see what you guys think. He was envisioning an overnight meet in Bluff. Let me know. Call, write or e-mail me [anniet@lasal.net](mailto:anniet@lasal.net), PO box 344 Moab Utah 84532.

So that's all from me,  
Flowers and Smiles  
Annie T Payne

An addendum to the above as we go to press: Life as we currently know it---We are going to do a CPRG board meeting in conjunction with the UGO meeting, and do the guide general membership meeting at Sand Island the end of October/November, probably with the GCRG membership if it all works out. Many fun activities will occur, even though we have no idea yet what they may be. That's the trip itinerary right now. Remember, though, wind, rain, animals and the elements can change anything at any time, so be flexible! Dave Focardi CPRG VP (don't you love all those initials! I live for them.)

## 2001 Desolation/Grey Canyon Interpretive Trip

What do you do if you are representing the CPRG organization on an Interpretive trip and no Interpretive people show up? Jake Burnett was faced with this recently when a dozen or so guides from six companies showed up at Sand Wash. To my surprise and disappointment, we were it!

Don't get me wrong, the local "BLM Program Manager" showed up the morning we were to launch and let us know he and his folks were the "Boss-ers" and we were the "Boss-ees." To be fair, he did express willingness to do everything within reason to keep any conflicts we may have away from our customers and expressed other areas we could cooperate, since they got 3% of the permit fee gross. Apparently doing some interpretive work down river wasn't one of them, because he soon waved "bye-bye" and headed up the hill.

Back when I was a corporate executive in private industry, I sometimes used to do these "pep" talks. I called them my "I'm from Headquarters, I'm here to help" talks.

Also the bear guy from the Division of Wildlife showed up to tell us about how to keep

him from having to put down any more bears and gave out some cards on how to react when confronted with a bear. He was sincere in his concern. I wondered as I waved "bye-bye" to him if he had any knowledge of the Deso/Grey area from an interpretive standpoint.

I subsequently heard through the grapevine that some of the "problem" bears from one of the National Parks, Yellowstone I think, had been transplanted to the our area above the river. I don't know if this is factual or not, but I sure am going to be asking the question about these pre-trained camp robbers, if I ever see him again.

Oh! Another thing! When asked, the "BLM Program Manager" told us about all the progress made recently in talks with the Ute's about visiting their lands on river left. We still are not supposed to, but apparently they have agreed to a quarter mile from the river easement they will maintain as "wild and scenic" from now on. Shucks! No chance for an oil rig or a casino -- or is there? Also, it is now officially authorized for us to allow our customers to gaze towards river left as we progress down the river. We can even look ourselves! To my surprise I found that my eyes were trespassing all these years. We weren't supposed to be looking that way prior to these recent "breakthroughs."

A bit of a disclaimer here. None of the above has expressed by Jake or any of the others I was with on the trip and I didn't discuss it myself with any of them. This was my attitude, however, when I found out we were to be abandoned to our own devices on this so called "Interpretive Trip". Pretty sour, huh? The previous interpretive trip I had attended was loaded with people. Guides, interpretive folks, geologists, botanists, star guys, river rangers, company owners, the concession people. I guess the Yampa is a more desirable trip, so it is supported. It was a good deal and I expected this one to be as well backed by our public servants. Was it thin because it was a weekend? You know these government workers!

Anyway, enough sour grapes and back to the original theme. What was Jake to do?

First he sat us all down in a circle after a summons from his "conch" shell. We all tried to learn how to blow it over the week. He told us the plan was for us to operate as a tribe of Fremonts. He described in some detail how a tribe operates on a consensus basis and shares knowledge with each other.

He then asked us to introduce ourselves in depth, talking about our history as well as plans, hopes and aspirations. This would speed up the

process of getting to know each other. He then went in to an in depth discussion about himself along those lines. Kevin from Tag-a-Long went next and in the spirit of what Jake had proposed, talked extensively about himself, making a few personal disclosures. That set the stage for all to be quite detailed. I thought it was a great introduction and "icebreaker" and it proved to be so.

Jake brought with him an extensive library in a couple of rocket boxes. He had to have spent a lot of time in a couple of libraries to get all of the books that supplemented his personal stuff. There were books on ranchers and families who had settled the area; the Indians who preceded them, as well as succeeded them; myths and rituals, crafts and skills related to tool making and other aspects of living as a Fremont and on and on. He also had books on geology and other aspects of the canyons we might be interested in. Each of us were to read and study these every day and report to the rest of the tribe about our findings in the evening. He even had a drum along that proved to be a good move, even though I personally was apprehensive at first. What a great stress reliever and an instigator of a group dynamic, dancing. The introduction process and these subsequent interactions fostered a desire in me to share what I know and am, that permeated the whole week. Apparently it had the same effect on the others. People broke into their personal libraries for stuff they used with their customers. They hiked and showed places along the river that only they and a few in their company know about.

Jake himself is good on plants and flower identification and the hikes were leisurely and informative.

A sweat lodge on day three, with further in depth personal disclosures, nearly prayers, seemed to pull the group further into a tribal mode and by the end of the week I drew the following conclusion. It would not be possible to match with an interpretive plan what happened spontaneously on this trip related to all aspects of Desolation and Grey Canyons.

Realistically, as time goes on the relationships forged will weaken and the strength of the emotions I have about the experience will wane. I will always remember this tribe and it's members with warmth. What will remain strongest because of them, is my commitment to each of the companies represented, that if there is ever a problem, ever anything going on that requires me to step up and be counted, I'll be

there. That is my big take away because of the classy people with whom I spent these few days.

It strikes me this feeling is right in line with CPRG's dedication to "Celebrating the unique spirit of the river community." This is what it is all about. One of those life experiences, I guess.

By: Paul R. "Pops" Smith

## San Juan Interpretive Trip

I just got off the San Juan Interpretive trip yesterday, so I am writing this while all is still fresh in my mind. We took 5 days to go from Bluff to Mexican Hat, with a layover day at Eight foot rapid to do a Swiftwater Rescue course with Ken and Jen McCarthy, courtesy of High Desert Adventure. HDA was formerly Sleight Expeditions, and they were the most excellent sponsoring outfitter. Along with Dan Murphy as the chief interpreter/raconteur, we also had Chris Carlson as the archeologist and Eric Jones (in his own Aire ducky) courtesy of the Moab BLM office as geologist. The other aspects of Eric and Chris' life that were of importance to the trip are that they play Mandolin/Guitar and Fiddle/Banjo respectively, which dovetails nicely with my 5String Banjo picking- especially since we all played together here in Moab with the band Keltika before Chris moved to Albuquerque.

The trip was excellent. The weather was perfect, the guides were great, and Dan Murphy knew more stuff than we had time to even touch. Here is a general rundown of the trip-

Day 1) Launch around 10am, float down a short way to just above the (erroneously known) Kachina panel- better known as the Butler Panel- to view Peregrines in their nest. Rick Boretti, one of the BLM river rangers, has done extensive raptor studies on the Juan and published previously in the Confluence (Vol 6 #2 Fall 1999). He set up a spotting scope on a tripod and we all took turns viewing the female in the nest while we talked about peregrines and other bird issues. A private on a single boat trip joined in to listen and learn with the rest of us.

Then we went down to the Butler Panel and AJ and Geoff of HDA set up lunch while Dan and Chris talked about the Butler panel. Nancy and Dano of Oars were there with their guests and we all listened in. The large figures are Basketmaker (100BC to 700AD-more or less, depending on who you talk to), and recall the Kachina cults didn't start until about the 14<sup>th</sup> century. So calling the panel the "Kachina"

Panel is not entirely correct, if not wildly misleading.

We then went down to the camp opposite River House on the right, letting OARS have the corral camp (aka Cottonwood). We hiked up to River House with Dan and Chris and got more information than can be repeated here. We then hiked down the bench to some surface sites and then to the Barton trading post and water wheel.

Day 2) To have plenty of time day 2, we hiked up San Juan hill before breakfast (but after coffee) and did some geology with Eric and myself, then hiked up Chinle wash to the Hillerman Alcove where Dan Murphy showed Tony the place where the New York Times bestseller "Thief of Time" was born. Dan has known Tony Hillerman since he was a reporter in Sante Fe.

We then proceeded down to Eight foot rapid where we shared camp with OARS, since we were going to be laying over to do a Swiftwater rescue component on Day 3.

Day 3) Dan and Eric talked about Bioherms and oil production as breakfast settled and we waited for the sun to warm us up before the Swiftwater class. Eric is a petroleum engineer and is familiar with the Aneth field and the Big Flat & Bartlett fields which produce out of the Paradox formation. The Paradox has anywhere from 29 to 40 (or more) cycles of transgression to regression- depending on which argumentative geologist you heard from last. The Aneth field was discovered as a result of Don Baars research on the Bioherms found nicely exposed at Eight foot rapid. The Kane creek zone (cycle 21) is a fractured carbonaceous shale. It produces out of vertical fractures, and best when drilled with expensive horizontal technology. Those are the ones in the Island in the Sky area (up there- not actually in the national Park) and one over north of Lisbon - an anomalous vertical well that has been producing for close to 30 years, as well as the Frank Shafer #1 1925 blowout along the river.

The Swiftwater class involved everyone and all our ropes, pulleys and gear- more by design than sheer love of gear. Of course, any Swiftwater class provides knowledge, not experience, and the instructors emphasized the need to practice. We shared camp with a private that came by rather late in the day hoping to camp there. They showed us how to party with their Hawaii Luau night and outlasted all but the most hardened guides (not me!).

Day 4)The next morning we hiked up the perched meander at Eight foot and saw plenty of fossils and wild flowers, and continued down to the “fossil stop” for lunch and a look at a 6’ long crinoid stem. We then went to the camp across from the Hat where many of us took the early time into camp to surf, converse, or nap(all three in many cases). We had a local Navajo young man join us for the evening and next morning , providing us some entertainment with insights into cultural differences.

Day5) We took off from camp and reached the takeout at 10:15- fifteen minutes late from the approved itinerary- the first time we were late for any of our scheduled activities.

The participants were: from High Desert Adventures- Nute Davis, Doug Deutschlander, Dave Huff, Barb King, Geoff Muhelstein, A.J. Reeves, Matt Royden, and Randy Tucker, from OARS Steve Dillon and Chelse Decker, from Desert Whitewater (the outfitting arm of Canyon REO) Justin Loxley and Matt Wencel; Brock Disanti from Outward Bound. Interpreters were: Dan Murphy-history, geology, archaeology, humor, Rick Boretti-Raptors/BLM, Eric Jones-geology/guitar/vocals, Chris Carlson-archaeology and fiddle/vocals; Ken and Jen McCarthy-swiftwater rescue, and Dave Focardi-nominal TL, geology, banjo.

All in all, the relaxed 5 day schedule provided ample time for interpretation, plenty of time for ALL questions to be answered at any stop before we left, plenty of time to see many things, no need to rush at any meal, and plenty of time for music in the evenings. We are all in awe of Dan Murphy’s knowledge and story telling skills, and of his ability to start teaching us to become the interpreter he is.

#### **NEWS FROM THE UINTA BASIN from Herm Hoops**

COLORADO OUTWARD BOUND purchased a bunch of new duckies for the coming season and ADRIFT purchased new Hyside boats. RIVER RUNNERS TRANSPORT opened RIVER RUNNER, a retail river store in Vernal. CENTENNIAL CANOE OUTFITTERS has purchased the Buggy Whip operation in Steamboat Springs.

DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT has widened the Split Mountain boat ramp by 3 times its size, funded by concession fees. Lines have been painted on the ramp in order that rangers will be able to accurately measure it! The Yampa River is cutting into the Deerlodge access road and the Monument is building a detour road

around the threatened area. The Quarry entrance road has been repaved.

VERNAL BLM is continuing to work on access problems on the White River at Cowboy Canyon and Bonanza. Preliminary plans are for development of a new access above Bonanza. A new access, complete with block outhouse, was completed at the Enron takeout last year. Consideration is being made to introduce a fee program on the White River. Uinta County has paved the Glen Bench access road from the Bonanza Highway to Mountain Fuels Bridge.

UTE TRIBE takeout on the White River at Mountain Fuels Bridge has almost been completely washed out, using it is almost impossible. The White River access at Orray is being taken over by trees and shrubs.

US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE is looking for a boatmin to work on the Endangered Fish Recovery Project; contact Mark Fuller at [MARK\\_H\\_FULLLER@fws.gov](mailto:MARK_H_FULLLER@fws.gov) as soon as possible. The FWS will again be conducting a catfish reduction program on the Yampa during low water, and are looking for "fishing" volunteers!

CPRG will be conducting a river guide training seminar in Jensen on May 29, 2001.

#### **Book Review**

##### **River Flowing from the Sunrise An Environmental History of the Lower San Juan**

James M. Aton and Robert S. McPherson  
Foreword by Donald Worster

"Imagine a river trip down the San Juan with a boat-load of old-timers:Navajo, Ute, Mormon pioneer, scientist, miner, artist--all regaling us with stories filled with personality, emotion, and opinion. Add two historians to place every story in environmental context, gently filling in the cultural and political background, fitting the San Juan into the fabric of American history.

"River Flowing From the Sunrise takes us on that enviable trip. In doing so, Jim Aton and Bob McPherson meet the challenge laid down in their own concluding chapter: they capture 'the river landscape's power ... armed with science, local intelligence, and imagination,' and 'meld the secular with the sacred, and imagine a new yet old way to live in this very difficult landscape.

*Stephen Trimble*, author of [The People: Indians of the American Southwest](#) and coeditor of [Testimony: Writers of the West Speak on Behalf of Utah Wilderness](#).

"River Flowing from the Sunrise is an outstanding environmental history of a western river, smoothly and sensitively written, even handed, and thoughtful. It provides an excellent case study of an important western river and the environmental history of its corridor and surrounding region."

*Mark Harvey*, author of [A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement](#)

The authors recount twelve millennia of history along the lower San Juan River, much of it the story of mostly unsuccessful human attempts to make a living from river's arid and fickle environment. From the Anasazi to government dam builders, from Navajo to Mormon herders and farmers, from scientific explorers to busted miners, the San Juan has attracted more attention and fueled more hopes than such a remote, unpromising, and muddy stream would see to merit.

Title: River Flowing from the Sunrise An Environmental History of the Lower San Juan  
Authors: James M. Aton and Robert S. McPherson  
Trim size: 8 1/2 x 11 inches  
Number of pages: 232 pages  
Retail price: \$21.95 paper  
ISBN: 0-87421-403-3  
Publication date: December 2000  
Contact: Brooke Bigelow Marketing Manager  
Utah State University Press  
1-800-239-9974 fax (435) 797-0313 e-mail: [bbigelow@upress.usu.edu](mailto:bbigelow@upress.usu.edu)

### **Flipped Out on the Colorado**

Want to be part of really cool project? We're looking for the best, wildest, most unbelievable whitewater boating mayhem photos from the Colorado and its tributaries! We want to put a collection of these shots into a classic picture book devoted entirely to boating bloopers. From Grand Canyon, Cataract, Westwater, Desolation/Gray, and Lodore, to the Dolores and the San Juan, were looking for flips, "almost" flips, gnarly boat wrecks, wraps, rescues, rides that went wrong-or almost went wrong-you

name it. We want the best whitewater bedlam shots of what "Big Red" and its feeders can dish out! We're offering a fee and a copy of the book for photos used (not huge \$ but better than a paddle in your eye). We've already got a great start, and would like to have all photos by 9/1/01 (please retain a duplicate of your photos just in case the post office goes postal). Please contact

Tom at Puma Press, P.O. Box 30998, Flagstaff, Arizona 86003,

and mark your envelope, "photo enclosed." Or send your inquiries or your photo for consideration to [Pumapress@aol.com](mailto:Pumapress@aol.com). Muchas gracias.

### **River Ranger JOB Westwater!!!**

The Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office has an opening for a seasonal GS-4 Recreation Technician/River Ranger. Recreation Technician will work in the Moab Field Office Area along the Colorado River between Grand Junction, Colorado, and Moab, Utah.

Duties include; conducting check-ins of boaters at Westwater Ranger Station to ensure users have necessary resource protection and safety equipment, accompany river patrols of Westwater Canyon of the Colorado River (Class III and IV whitewater) to clean campsites and check boater compliance, perform light maintenance of camping and launch area facilities.

Requirements; valid driver's license; ability to get along with people, and must be able to and have experience rowing class III and IV whitewater. Must have personal transportation to and from Westwater.

Apply on-line using Quickhire:

[www.nc.blm.gov/jobs/](http://www.nc.blm.gov/jobs/)

we recommend that you also submit a resume to Utah Department of Workforce Services in Moab, 1165 S. Hwy 191 Suite 2, Moab, Utah 84532 (435)259-3700.

For more information contact; Marilyn Peterson at 435-259-2119 Bureau of Land Management Moab Field Office 82 East Dogwood Moab, Utah 84532

Editorial note(Dave Focardi): I always thought it was whiny old boatman who complained about the lake, but the more time you spend on rivers, the more you hate the lake. Look at all that river that is underwater. After 10 cent you'd just be getting warmed up. Do a few more scouts, camp at Bowdie or Clearwater, do some hikes, run to Dark, scout, get scared, run, hike, and go camp on one of the endless beaches. If thinking about that after seeing these pictures and hearing the stories doesn't make you want to drain the lake, you need a reality check. That is just the selfish reason for draining the lake. And that's only Cataract Canyon! We're not even going down to Glen Canyon yet. Some of the REAL reasons to drain the lake: the delta wetland habitat is disappearing, the riparian environment is a manmade fiasco, the lakes are filling with silt and the dams will be useless. If you don't get involved with the Glen Canyon Action Network, don't talk to me.

## Boatmen Can See In The Dark

He led two boys up the bajada, gliding purposefully through calf-deep cheat grass, following a path that had been pounded out by footfalls of the summer's tourists. He felt the feathery seed heads brush against the sides of his sinewy boatman's legs; his toes probed through the open fronts of his beat up shoes. The line of trampled cheat went up the plain beyond the cooling shade of riverside box elders and onward toward the creek. It was joined by other campsite trails, some of which ended at the creek or at clearings signifying picnic areas in the trees. He knew without looking whether the next step would put him in the creek, over a rock, or at the boats.

He sensed the trail only to confirm his memory of it and so he was able to turn around and teach while traveling. The boys were parts of vacationing families spending their last night on the river. They soaked up every bit of the boatman's display and, when they could, even affected the mannerisms. The folded arms and cocked hip when stopped; the air of casual anarchy or vague contempt; the hidden marshmallow heart yearning to be discovered; the twitch of the hand poised to grab pliers from the holster although they had neither belt nor pliers. This was how teenage boys learned to become teenage men ready to join the pride of boatmen that worked the canyons.

This is *Latrodectus mactans*, the black widow spider. Learn from it and don't let your women eat you. He also told them other sayings: this is the way the ancients made fish traps; and yet again, row the boat exactly like this; and step here, run there, stop! Look under here before cutting the *Rhus trilobata* for an arrow shaft. Look! What is it?

"A black widow spider?" one guessed.

"Scientific name?"

"Mujer que me come?" quipped the other in Spanish\*.

"Excellent, my boy. Welcome to the pride."

Back at the boats others from the pride stretched to reenergize their torpid muscles for the night's feeding. There was the meat. There was the salad, the chocolate milk, the soup, the vegetables, and the dessert to prepare for 36 dudes. There would be the cleaning up and putting away and the attempts to communicate with the people from another planet – an enervating evening leaving the pride members exhausted until the night called them out to tell stories, court Venus's daughters or lead young men along new paths to enlightenment.



The ritual of getting drunk and the story telling did not appeal this night so I busied myself setting out our buckets of dish water to drown some of the overabundance of mice that bred on spilled dinners in the days before skunks fed on mice or badgers fattened on skunks. It was a simple time when Venus was close at hand and the bedroom was a bag laid down at the edge of the kitchen clearing.

I could not hear them and could not know that they were leaving the faint but useful starlight. They were moving fast, having learned the trail that afternoon. They learned that they could see enough of the trail to navigate without flashlights out in the open but tonight the lesson was about the utter darkness that broods underneath the heavy forest canopy that blocks even the astral light which, while pale, is as daylight for accustomed eyes. They advanced but the boys were surprised and wondered, "How can you see?"

"Follow my voice. Boatmen can see in the dark," he whispered as he continued to feel his way in the blackness. He felt the grass get thin and the trail widen. He knew that with another step he would be in the clearing and he would then veer just so to miss the picnic table. By now I could hear them approaching, though seeing was out of the question.

"Where are we?" they whined.

"Follow my voice," he insisted.

HUUUHHNNCKKKH!!! I exploded as my best friend's foot and 183 pounds landed on my belly and he climbed over as though my supine body were a log. "What a dumb shit," I thought. "But I can't blow the cover now. This is too hilarious for words."

"What was that?"

"It was nothing. Come on. Follow my voice."

HUUGUCHHH! I wheezed as the cub stepped on me and went through the night to join his guide.

"Where are you? Guys? How can you see where you're going?" pled the last boy, needing reassurance.

"Boatmen can see in the dark," said the cub. "Follow my voice."

I oozed out a pathetic hhhhuuuuhhhh as the third one walked over me and they careened off into the night.

As I nursed my sore diaphragm, hurt as much from stifling my laughter as from being stomped, I chortled over the irony of belonging to a self-deluding species.

---

\* pronounced 'moo-HAIR kay may COE-may', meaning "woman that eats me."

## Colorado Plateau River Guides

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### River Despair

As the years fly by every river guide must face,  
This great life won't allow a perpetual race.  
Eventually all of us give way to mortality,  
Time plus wear at some point equals finality.

A chance step off the boat to the slick rivers edge,  
A quick slip, intense pain, I can't climb this small ledge.  
Walk it out says my mind as I continue to try,  
I can't be hurt with two days yet of river to ply.

The pain persists as the minutes pass,  
Worsening, not improving as I stretch in the grass.  
How bad am I hurt? Can I even row?  
The worst of the rapids are still down below.

I remember the shame as I told the trip leader,  
I can't pull my load, not the normal procedure.  
I sat in my boat watching the other guides work,  
I should have been helping, I felt like a jerk.

Suddenly I realized, I may be hurt badly,  
I gazed at the canyon and our customers, sadly.  
My anguish was living and breathing - acute,  
As I thought - No more river? My despair was absolute.

It's not accepted that men need to cry,  
But on came the tears leaking out of each eye.  
Was this my last trip down these rivers I love?  
I prayed that it wasn't to my God up above.

Now I'm back on the river, recovery complete,  
But I'll never forget that sick feeling of defeat.  
Facing the alternative as I did last year,  
Enhances each moment in this desert so dear.

So colleagues, when difficult customers reign,  
Just smile and be helpful, they're the ones in pain.  
You're here with your senses tuned in to glean,  
The God given beauty of the enchanting river scene.

When will I be done with my white-water career?  
When it comes I'll be ready and I'll persevere.  
For by having faced the Tiger, I live each river day,  
With this calm and insight that shows me the way,  
That for this guide it really is, all of it, play.